



Fluorouracil (5-FU)

At the Clinical Center referred to as 5-FU.

How Given: Intravenously (by vein)

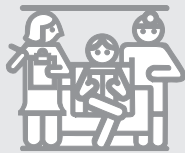
Drug Action: 5-FU blocks a protein that cancer cells need to copy and repair DNA. DNA is the genetic material in cells that is used to make new cells.

Side Effects:

1. Lip, mouth, and throat sores can occur within 7 days and last for up to 14 days.
2. Bone marrow effects can include a temporary decrease in white blood cells, platelets, and red blood cells. These usually occur 7 to 14 days after treatment.
3. Stomach cramping and diarrhea can occur within 7 days.
4. Skin changes can occur. These include increased sensitivity to sunlight; dry, flaky skin; red, sore, and peeling palms of hands and soles of feet. The skin overlying veins used for treatment can become darkened. Nails can become dark, hard, and brittle.
5. Temporary hair thinning or hair loss can occur 14 to 21 days after treatment.
6. Eyes can water and feel irritated.

**Special
Instructions:**

1. Do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products unless prescribed by your NIH doctor.
2. Protect your skin from sun exposure. Wear protective clothing and use a sunscreen with an SPF rating of 15 or more when in the sun.
3. Call your NIH doctor or nurse if you
 - are unable to drink for more than 1 day or unable to eat for more than 2 days after treatment
 - have diarrhea for more than 2 days
 - have a temperature of 101.0 °F (38.3 °C) at any time, or have a temperature of at least 100.4 °F (38.0 °C) that lasts for 1 hour or occurs two times in a 24-hour period
 - have any unusual bleeding or bruising



This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Living with Cancer Chemotherapy Series
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Nursing Department

Questions about the Clinical Center? OCCC@cc.nih.gov